 Waco Community Watch Meeting

Thursday September 1, 2022

6:30 pm

Minutes:

* J. Barrett opened the meeting at 6:30 pm and welcomed all members present. Meeting turnout was small. We will continue to encourage members to attend the meetings via Facebook and email.
* J. Barrett again reminded everyone that window stickers are available to members of the community at no cost.
* Barrett reported that the contractor the Town Board had approved had finished the installation of the new speed limit signs on all the town maintained streets. He also reported that the new Neighborhood Watch signs had also been installed along with the new speed limit signs. There are still a few Neighborhood Watch signs that will be placed in other areas in town.
* J. Barrett reported that the Waco Community Watch Facebook Group page membership has grown to 78 participants. Several of those that attended the Block Party had joined the group. Participation in sharing of news and crime stories is active on the page. Stories and other information is being shared on the page on a regular basis. Group members are encouraged post to the page.
* The email chain group also continues to grow and remains active in sharing of information. Information shared on the Facebook page is also being shared via email. A large number of the attendees at the Block Party had provided email addresses and they will be added to the email list.
* J. Barrett presented the financial statements for the Community Watch program. To date donations have been received totaling $1,250.15. Expenses (window stickers, signs, the logo, postage supplies, the brochure, etc) total $1,046.07. Donations received during the Block Party brought the current balance to $204.08.
* Community Watch letters have been drafted and send to all the churches in the Community with additional information on the program and included window stickers for the churches to display.
* The group discussed setting up a meeting with the Washington Elementary staff to discuss their participation in the program. The group agree that working through the children at Washington will be a good avenue to reach all areas of the community. Barrett encouraged other members that are interested in attending the meeting to contact him or Tracy. The group will be notified when the meeting is scheduled. Barrett said that he would follow up with Burns Middle and Burns High School concerning participation in the program.
* The group was reminded that Community Watch brochures remain available and members are encouraged to hand out brochures to others in their neighborhoods. Brochures have been placed at the Waco Post office and we are planning on placing them in other businesses in the community.
* Further discussion on the need and number of Watch Captains for the program was held. Members agreed that at a minimum there is a need for one person to serve as a Watch Captain on each side of town (North Main St. – South Main St.) to serve as a liaison to the program. In June Tracy Chichester volunteered to serve as the South Main St. Captain. Barrett asked Flavio Hallis if he would take on the responsibility of being the Watch Captain for the North Main St. side of town and he agreed to take the responsibility. We will provide his contact information to the group. The names of members in the other parts of town were mentioned for other positions. We will continue to discuss this issue at the next meeting. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact John Barrett, Tracy Chichester or Flavio Hallis.
* Specific Community Watch issues discussed including identifying street lights that are blocked or partially blocked by tree limbs and illegal dumping of construction waste on Moss St. Speeding is also a problem on North and South Main St and on Jess Hord Rd. Barrett will see if he can get the speed trailer from the Sheriff’s Dept. to help with the speeding problem. Barrett reported that he had discussed with the town board that Duke Energy stated that they were not responsible for clearing tree limbs from around street lights and it is up to the home owners or the town to have this addressed. Board members are looking into options on getting the limbs trimmed.
* The group discussed the possibility of working with the Burns High School Shop class to build a small “Neighborhood Book Library” and a “Neighborhood Food Pantry” where members of the community could provide books and non-perishable food items for others. These wooden structures would look something like a large bird house on a post where books and food items could be stored. The idea of placing these in the area of the new playground behind the Community Center was discussed. Barrett will follow up and report more at the next meeting. (See pictures below)
* Members present discussed the Block Party that was held on August 27th and everyone agreed that the event was a success. The fire department donated 300 hotdogs for the event and the use of their cooker and most of the hotdogs were grilled. The town provided funds for chips, drinks and supplies and very little was left over. Members provided chili and slaw and we actually ran out of chili by the end of the day. There was a small amount of slaw left over and it was given away. Overall, the turnout for the event was great and everyone seemed to really enjoy themselves and members deemed the event a success.

The group wants to thank the Waco Community Volunteer Fire Department for the donation of the hotdogs, the grill and ice and for standing by for the event. We also want to thank All American Bounce House rentals for the donation of the bounce house and the shaved ice machine, cups and flavoring, all of which were a big success.

We also want to thank watch members for donating their time, the use of their coolers, canopies, bean bag boards and other items and for their donations of the chili and slaw that helped make the day possible.

The banners that we had made to advertise the event were collected and can be used again for the next event.

The group discussed the idea of making the Block Party and annual event and discussed some ideas to make next year’s Block Party even better:

* Adding some type water feature for the kids. (Water slide, sprinkler?)
* Adding some type of music
* Increasing the outreach to the community
* More games for kids and adults
* Holding a raffle and/or giving away door prizes
* Involving community businesses
* Involving community churches
* Partnering with Back-to-school community activities

To the workers, Diane Farris, Loretta Shull, Flavio Hallis, Mike Scism, Israel and Cindy Hamilton, Tiffany Lott, Tracy Chichester, Becky and Chester Haynes, Pat Darty, and everyone else that came out and shared a hotdog with us, we say THANK YOU! You helped make our first Block Party a success!

* Minutes of the meeting will be completed and shared via Facebook and email later in the week.
* The next meeting is Thursday October 6th at 6:30 pm. Please attend and bring a friend.
* Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Book Library / Food Pantry ideas

